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NIE 24-56 THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK IN
ITALY
(Summary of Conclusions)

1. Background - This estimate considers principally the possibility of parliamentary cooperation between the governing Christian Democratic-dominated center coalition, which has only a slim parliamentary majority, and the parties to the extreme left, particularly the Nenni Socialists who are still allied to the Communists in a unity of action pact.
11. The current political situation is characterized by growing popular pressures for more rapid progress in a domestic reform program, by the governing center coalition's lack of the cohesion and discipline necessary to enact such a program, and by the extreme left's

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tactics of supporting the coalition in
important votes on domestic issues.

- A. Despite continued industrial growth
and comparative financial stability,
the severe problem of unemployment
remains and the need for social reform
persists.
- B. The Communists have suffered some
setbacks during the past year. More
important than these actual losses has
been the psychological effect -- a wide-
spread impression in Italy that the
Communist Party has passed the zenith
of its electoral strength.
1. Nevertheless, the Italian Communist
Party is still the largest in Western
Europe, its electoral appeal remains

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great, and the recent setbacks cannot be regarded as a decisive reversal of trend.

111. The Political Outlook

A. The Christian Democratic Party will dominate all Italian governments between now and the next general elections. Because of lack of agreement and discipline within the party, many of its leaders will probably welcome, and some may even solicit, the votes of the Nenni Socialists to push the reformist program to which the Christian Democrats are committed. In this event, a tacit collaboration between the government and the Nenni Socialists would

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probably emerge. We believe it unlikely, however, that such collaboration would be translated into a formal agreement."

B. "Such a tacit collaboration between the government and the Nenni Socialists would be precarious and possibly short-lived."

C. "If this tacit collaboration should break down, the situation might relapse into virtual immobility, or during a period of severe governmental crisis could result in a formal agreement between the center and the extreme left. We believe, however, that the Christian Democratic leaders will in general continue their present course, avoiding either formal collaboration with Nenni

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or the virtually static government which would follow were they to surrender to rightist pleas for a halt in the reform program."

D. The next general elections must be held by 1958. Parliamentary strengths of the various parties will not be greatly altered although the political center of gravity will probably shift somewhat to the left.

1. However, maneuverings of parties and factions, struggles for personal power among political leaders, the nature of progress toward reform, and possibly changes in the international situation might alter the direction or dimensions

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of present trends.

E. Italian foreign policy is likely to continue its pro-Western character. Italy will probably, however, display increasing independence and seek to avoid the appearance of subservience to the United States.

1. However, if Nenni Socialist collaboration were to continue for some time or to become formal, or if the Nenni Socialists actually participated in the government, there would be serious danger that Italy's pro-Western policy would be gradually eroded even though not officially abandoned.

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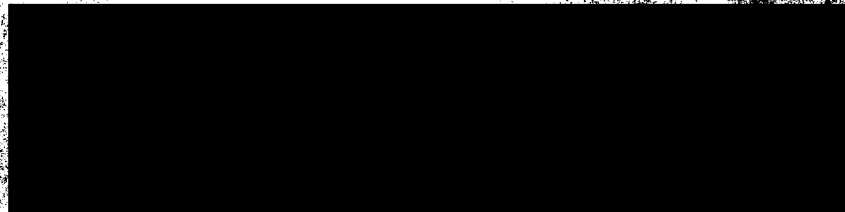
Italian President Gronchi is

"new look" in Italy:

- A. wants to change Italian presidency from ceremonial to executive
- B. wants to encourage Italian political opening to the left
- C. His own Christian Democrats and other democratic parties now interested in these possibilities

II. Gronchi is 68 years old. In appearance is attractive, impressive and articulate speaker with personal flair for showman.

- A. Long record of anti-Fascism, service to Christian Democratic Party, and public office.



III. Gronchi wants Italian presidency to become US-style leadership.

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his purpose.

B. Actually, nothing in Italian constitution prevents president from exercising powers similar to US president in domestic affairs:

Italian president may not, however, negotiate foreign treaties.

C. Gronchi has already gone beyond presidential predecessors:

1. Insists on literal interpretation of requirement that all ministers present decrees of their ministries for presidential signature.
2. Went over heads of cabinet and called meeting (late '55) of top-level Italian ambassadors and foreign affairs officials to "discuss" foreign policy.

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2. Stated, on own initiative
Italy would recognize Communist
China, work for Peiping's
inclusion in UN.
4. Pushed through long-delayed
establishment of constitutional
court.
5. Established "kitchen cabinet",
with access to opinions of
Italian military, police and
leftist political parties as well
as Vatican and US.

IV. Gronchi's definition of term "opening to
the left" appears to be CD promotion of
reform policies, such as Vanoni plan,
which would either draw support from
leftist parties or show leftists up as
actually not pro-reform.

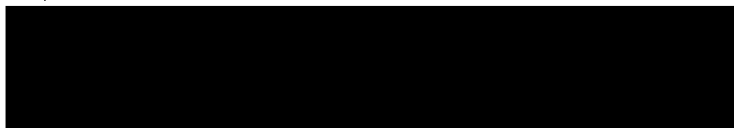
- A. Believes CD reform program could lure
Nenni Socialists away from Communists

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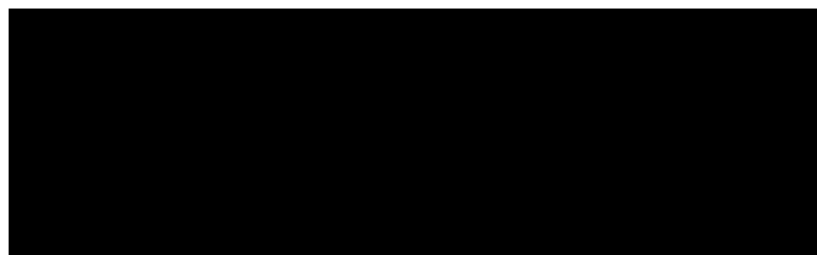
Antonio Gronchi's assets are a strongly democratic and anti-Communist stand.

A. Also believes in and shows talent for maintaining CD unity and strength, while counting on varieties of opinion within CD Party to extend scope of CD popular appeal.



VI. Gronchi's assets balanced by some liabilities:

A. Concentrates on Italian domestic problems somewhat to exclusion of world affairs.



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C. While strongly aware of Communists' Moscow ties and cadre organization, reportedly fails to appreciate dangers of Communist penetration.

1. Believes Commie power derives from popular support rather than "vociferous cadres", and holds that "you can't fool all the people all of the time."

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